



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

435 RYMAN MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802-4297

March 19, 2009

Chair Dennis Himmelberger
And Members of the House State Administration Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Sent via email

Honorable Chairman Himmelberger and Distinguished Members of the House State Administration Committee:

The City of Missoula is pleased to join each Clerk and Recorder across the State of Montana in supporting Senate Bill 394, expand types of elections that may be conducted by mail ballot election. The Missoula County Elections' Office conducted both the Primary and the General Election by mail ballot for the City of Missoula in 2007. The General Election in 2007 enjoyed significantly greater voter turnout – 46.1% – compared to the General Elections in 2001, 2003, and 2005 which had 32.99%, 27.29% and 26.65% voter turnout respectively. Significantly, the General Election including the mayoral race among those years was 2005, not 2007.

As I'm sure you're aware, the benefits associated with voting by mail are numerous. Working folks and single parents, increased electoral integrity and benefits to local government coffers are known benefits with remarkable merit. But, perhaps most importantly, an electoral process that affords greater participation in our democracy is surely a process that deserves support.

Please support Senate Bill 394.

Sincerely,

Mayor John Engen

cc: Missoula Delegation
Alec Hanson, Montana League of Cities and Towns
Gallatin Public Affairs
Vickie Zeier, Missoula County Clerk and Recorder
Marty Rehbein, City Clerk, City of Missoula
Missoula County Board of County Commissioners